

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 COME-00 OES-03 HEW-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 IO-11 OMB-01 /061 W

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R 230322Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6103

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0452

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US

SUBJECT: LAOS' POPULATION PROBLEM DESCRIBED BY SECRETARY OF  
STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS KHAMPHAY BOUPHA

1. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS KHAMPHAY BOUPHA,  
SECOND-RANKING OFFICIAL IN FOREIGN MINISTRY (AFTER PHOUNE  
SIPRASEUTH) TOLD ME DURING WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY RECEPTION  
FEBRUARY 20 THAT CENSUS OF POPULATION STILL UNDERWAY  
WOULD PROBABLY SHOW TOTAL LAO PUPULATION OF 3,500,000.  
OFFICIAL POSITION HERE, OF COURSE, IS THAT LAOS IS  
UNDERPOPULATED AND INCREASE MOST DESIRABLE.

2. KHAMPHAY BOUPHA WENT ON TO SAY THAT FOR FIFTY-YEAR  
PERIOD ENDING IN 1946 POPULATION OF LAOS HAD REMAINED  
CONSTANT AT 1,000,000. DURING THIS PERIOD, HE ADDED,  
FRENCH HAD TRAINED EXACTLY ONE LAO PHYSICIAN, DR. OUDOM  
SOUVANNAVONG, CURRENT PRESIDENT OF LAO RED CROSS. SINCE  
1946 LAO HAD MANAGED TO TRAIN "MORE THAN FIFTY PHYSI-  
CIANS, TWENTY-SEVEN ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE, ABOUT  
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THIRTY ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE." COMMUNIST SIDE HAD

ALSO TRAINED HUNDREDS OF PARA-MEDICAL PERSONNEL. AS  
A RESULT THE DEATH RATE, ESPECIALLY AMONG INFANTS,  
HAD BEEN DRASTICALLY REDUCED.

3. SOMEWHAT TO MY SURPRISE KHAMPHAY BOUPHA FURTHER  
REMARKED: "NOT ALL THAT MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED DURING  
THE WAR. IT WAS THE DEATH RATE FROM DISEASE, ESPECIALLY  
AMONG INFANTS, THAT KEPT THE POPULATION DOWN. OW,  
THANKS TO OUR EFFORTS IN HEALTH AND SANITATION WE HAVE  
CONTROLLED THAT PROBLEM."

4. COMMENT: I DON'T KNOW HOW WELL KHAMPHAY BOUPHA'S  
STATISTICS WOULD STAND UP UNDER SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS BUT  
HIS REMARKS WERE INTERESTING FOR TWO REASONS:

A. HE GAVE THE FORMER VIENTIANE SIDE CREDIT FOR  
SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD.

B. HE IGNORED THE USUAL PROPAGANDA LINE WHICH ACCUSES  
THE UNITED STATES OF DEPOPULATING LAOS DURING THE  
WAR AND IN GENERAL BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE  
ILLS THAT LAOS IS HEIR TO.  
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## Message Attributes

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